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LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURKINA FASO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the statement by the Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity regarding the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Michel KAFANDO

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Annex

Statement issued on 6 February 1999 by the Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity concerning the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea

On 17 December 1998, the Central Organ of the Mechanism of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution met at Ouagadougou at the level of heads of State and Government.

Its agenda included the question of the unfortunate dispute between two fraternal States, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The heads of State and Government, after having considered the report of the High-level OAU Delegation on the dispute, welcomed the commendable efforts made by the delegation with a view to promoting a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the dispute.

They also took note of the positions expressed by the two parties regarding the High-level Delegation's proposals and commended both of them for their cooperation with the delegation in carrying out its mission and for the restraint which they have displayed over many long months.

Today, the deterioration in the situation along the borders of Ethiopia and Eritrea is for us a source of the greatest and deepest concern.

It would be extremely unfortunate if this situation were to get out of control while the Organization of African Unity, with the valuable assistance of the United Nations and the international community, is pursuing efforts to find a peaceful settlement to the dispute.

I should therefore like, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity, to reiterate to both parties and particularly to their leaders, the appeal which the fourth summit meeting of the Central Organ made to them at Ouagadougou on 17 December 1998 to continue to cooperate with the High-level Delegation with a view to creating the necessary conditions for the rapid implementation of the framework agreement that was submitted to them and to continue to exercise restraint.

I should like to assure the two fraternal countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea that the Delegation, which continues to consider their dispute, remains convinced that the channels leading to a peaceful settlement have not been exhausted.

Accordingly, I solemnly and urgently appeal to them to continue to trust in Africa and the international community by putting an immediate and unconditional end to the hostilities that have recently resumed along their borders.